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ABSTRACT

A study examined the relationship between newspaper coverage of issues and public concern about them at the neighborhood and community-wide levels in an urban area. It was hypothesized that (1) newspaper coverage of issues would be more strongly related to concern about perceived community than neighborhood issues, (2) newspaper coverage would have greater influence on perceived community issue concerns than the reverse relationship, (3) neighborhood issue concerns would have a greater influence on newspaper coverage than the reverse relationship, and (4) neighborhood issue concerns would have a greater influence on community issue concerns than the reverse relationship. Subjects, 471 randomly selected adults (age 15 or older) in the Jefferson County (Kentucky) area including Louisville, were questioned in a door-to-door series of surveys from May 1980 to February 1982. Results supported the first hypothesis and were consistent with past evidence that the agenda-setting power of the media is strongest on unobtrusive issues. The other hypotheses were not supported: the causal patterns between concern and newspaper coverage varied from issue to issue. Results indicated the importance of examining agenda-setting effects of media on individual issues rather than aggregate rankings of sets of issues. Findings also showed that citizens are concerned about issues at both the neighborhood and community levels, but that neighborhood issues (at least in Louisville) receive less coverage than those of importance to the entire community. (Eight tables of data are included, and a list of coding category definitions and 36 footnotes are appended.) (NKA)

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EFFECTS OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE ON NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY ISSUE CONCERNS

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Measuring the influence of mass communication on people's perceptions of reality has traditionally been a major concern of media researchers. As McLeod and Chaffee have pointed out, people's cognitive maps are determined by a mixture of direct experience, interpersonal communication, and exposure to mass communication.[1] In particular, agenda-setting research has examined the relative influence of these three factors on audience members' issue concerns.[2] This paper focuses on this problem by examining the the relationship between newspaper coverage of issues and concern about them at the neighborhood and community-wide levels in an urban area.

Previous Research

The familiar agenda-setting hypothesis states that concern about issues is increased by higher levels of media coverage of them. Issue concerns are normally classified as cognitions rather than attitudes.[3] But as McLeod, Becker and Byrnes have suggested, issue concerns can be conceptualized at three levels: 1) audience members may assess the importance of issues to them personally; 2) people may classify issues according to perceptions of their importance to others; or 3) issue concerns may be indexed by how frequently they are discussed among a given group of people.[4]

The perceived importance of issues to others is the most commonly used measure of issue concern in agenda-setting research. Tipton, Haney, and Baseheart examined measured perceptions of issue importance in a local election campaign in Kentucky and newspaper coverage of them at two time points. Cross-

lagged correlations indicated mutual influence between media coverage and the perceived importance of the issues in the campaign.[5] Palmgreen and Clarke found that newspapers had a stonger influence on perceptions of issue importance to the Toledo community, while television had a greater impact on perceptions of issue importance to the nation.[6] Similarly, Smith demonstrated that media coverage of seven issues by a newspaper in Louisville had a moderate relationship with judgments of their importance to the community by citizens over a seven-year period, although the direction of the effect varied from issue to issue.[7]

Issue concerns as indexed by interpersonal discussion also appear influenced by media coverage. Atwood, Sohn, and Sohn found significant correlations between the content of a small-town daily newspaper and what subjects reported both reading and talking about with friends and family members.[8] When Sohn extended this analysis with measurements taken nine months later, the cross-lagged correlations indicated that newspaper coverage increased discussion of the town's problems, but did not affect perceptions of their importance.[9] After controlling for partisanship, McLeod, Becker and Byrnes found that respondents during the 1972 presidential campaign, who rated honesty in government and Vietnam as issues they most often talked about with others and what others talked about to them, tended to be the heaviest readers of the community newspaper most emphasizing these issues.[10]

Personal issue concerns have also received considerable research attention. In an early agenda-setting study, McCombs

and Shaw found a high rank-order correlation between undecided voters' personal issue concerns and a community newspaper's coverage of them in the 1968 presidential campaign.[11] In a two-wave panel study during the 1972 presidential campaign, McCombs and Shaw found that newspaper coverage had a greater impact on personal issue concerns than vice versa. Their results also indicated that newspapers had a stronger agenda-setting influence than did television news coverage of campaign issues.[12] Watt and van den Berg's data showed agenda-setting effects of media on citizens' concerns during the early stages of a controversy involving noise pollution from the landing of Concorde jets in Washington D.C.[13]

Several studies have examined the differential impact of media on the three types of issue concern. In a study in the early 1970s, Becker showed that Watergate and Middle East issues were the most talked about among a sample of college students, but they were judged less important to them personally; the reverse pattern was found for inflation.[14] Weaver, Graber, McCombs and Eyal's extensive fourteen-wave study during the 1976 presidential campaign provided evidence that voters' personal issue concerns and those they most talked about in communities were similar and more strongly influenced by media coverage than those perceived to be important in the communities studied, especially earlier in the campaign.[15] Atwater, Salwen, and Anderson demonstrated that the agenda-setting influence of environmental coverage in Michigan newspapers was smaller among respondents who discussed such topics more frequently.[16]

Despite the strong evidence of agenda-setting by media, the

impact of media is not uniform on all issue concerns. Zucker's analysis demonstrated that public perceptions of issues important to the nation were strongly affected by media coverage of them only when the issue were considered "unobtrusive;" that is, when people had little or no direct experience with them.[17] Hubbard, DeFleur and DeFleur found that citizens' perceptions of community issue concerns in Spokane were unrelated to media coverage, but were significantly correlated with public agency records indicating the actual prevalence of the concerns in the community.[18] Behr and Iyengar examined interrelationships among real-world cues, television news coverage and public concern about energy, inflation and unemployment in national samples. Based on longitudinal data, their results indicated that television news influenced public concern and not vice versa, yet "real world" indicators of conditions related to the three issues also affected concern about them.[19]

Despite the strong evidence about the agenda-setting process, several problem areas remain. First, with few exceptions, this research has tended to concentrate on political campaign issues. More attention needs to be paid to community issues, which have a more direct impact on people's day-to-day lives. Secondly, research based on one or two measurements has limited the ability to sort out the causal relationships between media coverage and issue concerns. Evidence discussed above points out that the causal pattern between the two variables may depend upon the type of issue concern measured. Finally, the use of aggregate agendas has obscured the fact that media influence may vary from

issue to issue. More issue by issue analyses over time are needed. This study, at least in part, attempts to address these problems.

The Development of Community Issues

Research on how community issues develop provides further evidence about the causal relationships between different measures of issue concern and media coverage. Tichenor, Donohue and Olien's studies of Minnesota communities has shown that conflict about issues tends to follow a basic pattern. In the initial stage, conflict is known about and participated in by only a small number of people who have direct knowledge of the situation. In the next stage, the issue becomes more defined, and the conflict grows to include a wider range of governmental and nongovernmental groups and individuals. In the final and longest stage, conflict is legitimized and information about it begins to reach the wider public in the community through both mass media and interpersonal channels.[20]

A study by Olien, Donohue and Tichenor, for example, showed that coverage of the conflict over placement of a powerline in four Minnesota communities peaked during its later stages, especially in the larger, more pluralistic communties. The results also indicated that newspapers were the most heavily used source of information in the earliest stages of the conflict, while later television became the most used source. The percentage of those finding the issue a "touchy topic" and "very important" peaked about three-quarters of the way through the conflict period.[21]

Based on their series of studies, Tichenor et al. have concluded:

> Rather than being an initiator of basic positions, the press is normally pushed into reporting events by organized forces in the system and its reports become an integral part of the social process which bear on the nature of events. Community groups may use the press and journalists as sources of intelligence, as indications of reaction of the public to events, and as a device for creating awareness and defining problems.[22]

It seems reasonable that a similar process may occur in urban communities, where people reside in distinct neighborhoods but also view themselves as part of a larger community. In urban communities, then, many issues and problems of concern to the public are likely to begin in local neighborhoods, where they are directly experienced and have their most impact on the residents. Other issues start at the community level, most often by public officals, community leaders, or organized groups, but the average citizen will have little direct experience with them. As they grow, both neighborhood and community-wide issues will eventually receive increasing coverage by the press. In fact, press coverage and interpersonal communication, are vehicles by which neighborhood issues can come to be perceived as important at the community level.[23] On the other hand, issues generated at the community level will tend to receive rapid press coverage, causing increased perceptions of them as important to the community

as a whole by the public.

Hypotheses

The following analysis explores the relationship between newspaper coverage and issue concerns at the neighborhood and community levels. Based on the above discussion, four hypotheses were tested:

1) Newspaper coverage of issues will be more strongly related to concern about perceived community than neighborhood issues;

2.) Newspaper coverage will have greater influence on perceived community issue concerns than the reverse relationship;

3.) Neighborhood issue concerns will have a greater influence on newspaper coverage than the reverse relationship;

4.) Neighborhood issue concerns will have a greater influence on community issue concerns than the reverse relationship;

Study Design

Measuring Neighborhood and Community Issue Concerns. A secondary analysis was performed using six surveys conducted in Louisville about five months apart from May, 1980 to February, 1982. These surveys were part of series that was originally

intended to provide information for use by local government decisionmakers.[24] Each of the surveys was based on a probability sample with random starts of about 471 persons, age fifteen or older. Each sample was stratified by age, race, sex and within eight geographic areas of Jefferson County (which includes the City of Louisville) to be proportional to Census results and population projections supplied by the Kentucky State Data Center.[25]

The questionnaires were administered by professional interviewers, who were given lists of randomly selected "starting" addresses drawn from city and county directories, along with their individual quota matrices. They were instructed to begin their search for eligible respondents at the first address on the list, moving to the next residential address on the left until one was located and interviewed. The process then began again at the next random address on their lists. Sudman has demonstrated that this sampling design is equivalent to a cluster sample with call-backs.[26] At least 20% of the completed interviews were verified by telephone.

Perceived community issue concerns in each survey were measured by this question:

> What do you think are our community's (that is, Louisville and Jefferson County's) most serious problems or needs?

Interviewers were instructed to probe for up to three responses. Nineteen issue categories were developed from the responses in

the first few surveys, and subsequent analyses of responses coded as "other" indicated no need for additional categories. Appendix A shows definitions of these categories.

Neighborhood issue concerns were measured by this follow-up question to the one about perceived community issues:

> Now let's switch for a minute and think about the way things are in your neighborhood, here in _____. What do you think are the most serious problems and needs in this neighborhood?

Interviewers were intructed to fill in the name most commonly used to describe the neighborhood in which the respondent resided. Again, interviewers probed for up to three responses. As might be expected, stable issue categories across the six surveys were more difficult to develop for the neighborhood than for the perceived community issue question, indicating the more rapid emergence and decline of issues in citizens' immediate environments. Generally speaking, neighborhood issue concerns were more narrowly defined than those at the community level. Appendix A also shows definitions of neighborhood issue categories.

Table 1 about here

An important consideration at this point in the analysis was the extent to which the two measures discriminated between community and neighborhood issues. The results shown in Table 1

demonstrate that respondents did discriminate between community and neighborhood issues. Five overlapping issues occurred in the community and neighborhood top-ten lists: crime, streets, housing, public recreation, and traffic control. Unique community issues were: economic development, education, the environment, local government, and the needy. Unique neighborhood issues were: sewers, litter, street lighting, drug abuse, and neighborhood civic spirit. Comparing the unique issues on the two lists, the neighborhood issues appear to be more obtrusive than the community issues.

Measuring the Media's Issue Agenda. The agenda-setting literature provides evidence that both the print and electronic media have an impact on people's concerns about issues. Ideally, then, agendas from both types of media should be measured, but time and cost factors precluded this from being done in this study. Consequently, the Louisville Times and Courier-Journal's coverage of community and neighborhood issues during the two years of this study was measured. At least in regard to community and neighborhood issues, the newspapers' coverage of issues is likely to be highly related to that of the local electronic media.[28]

Rather than conduct the usual expensive and time-consuming content analysis of a random sample of newspaper editions, a count of articles on community and neighborhood issues was determined using the newspapers' extensive electronic morgue. While an efficient method to determine emphasis on issues, it was not without problems. In some cases, the key words used to recall

material in the morgue did not match the categories as defined from the public opinion surveys. As a result, it was impossible to determine the newspapers' emphasis on the environment, local government, public recreation, or neighborhood civic spirit issues.

Table 2 about here

Table 2 shows the total count of articles from 1980 through 1982 for the community and neighborhood issues. These results show a tendency for overlapping and unique community issues to be given greater coverage than neighborhood issues during the period examined.

Given the newness of this method to measure the newspapers' emphasis on issues, attention was paid to the validity of these results. In a previous study, a content analysis was conducted, based on a random sample, of the Louisville Times' coverage of all but the traffic control, street lighting, and drug abuse issues between 1974 and 1981. When these issues were dropped from the analysis, the rank order correlation between the Louisville Times coverage of the eight issues between 1974 and 1981, based on the random sample, and the two newspapers' emphasis on them between 1980 through 1982, as determined from the morgue count, was .83 ($p < .01$), indicating a high degree of validity for the new method.[28]

Developing the Time Series. An important consideration in developing the data points to be examined over the six time

periods of the study was what Eyal, Winter, and DeGeorge have termed "the duration of the media-agenda measure," that is, the total interval during which media emphasis on a particular issue is measured.[29] This interval has been measured in agenda-setting studies anywhere from one day to six months. Stone, however, studied the cumulative agenda-setting effect of national news magazines on national public issue concerns. His data indicated that a four-to-six month span of media coverage resulted in the strongest agenda-setting effects.[30] In this study, the "data points" for media coverage consisted of the cumulative media coverage on each issue in the six months preceding or following each measurement of public opinion (including the month in which the survey was conducted).

The Results

Table 3 shows the rank order of public concerns about neighborhood and community issues in each of the six surveys. Little variation is evident in the rankings of the community-wide issues across the six surveys. The crime, public education and economic development issues concerned the respondents the most during the two-year span of the study. On the other hand, public concern about neighborhood issues varied considerably across the six time periods. Although neighborhood crime was of the most concern in each of the six surveys, the traffic control, streets, housing, and sewers issues were each ranked as high as No. 2 and as low as No. 5 across them.

Table 3 about here

Table 4 shows the rank order of newspaper coverage of the neighborhood, community and overlapping issues. Coverage of the neighborhood issues--sewers, drug abuse, litter, street lighting--was generally lowest and showed the most variability across the six time periods. Coverage of the community and overlapping issues tended to be more stable than for the neighborhood issues. With the exception of the needy and traffic control issues, community and overlapping issues received the greatest coverage in the six periods examined.

Table 4 about here

The results shown in Table 5 provide support for the hypothesis that newspaper coverage would be more strongly related to concern about perceived community than neighborhood issues. Rankings of the community issues and newspaper coverage of them are significantly correlated in the each of the six time periods. Only one significant correlation between newspaper coverage and neighborhood issue concern rankings is evident, although there are substantial and positive rank-order correlations in three other time periods.

Table 5 about here

At this stage in the analysis, the relationship between newspaper coverage and each issue individually over the six time periods was examined. A variety of research has demonstrated that issues can vary substantially in the amount of time it takes them to become part of the public agenda, as well as in their relationship over time with media coverage. Such individual differences can be obscured in aggregate rank-order correlations, such as those shown in Table 5. Examining each issue individually will allow at least some limited tests of the hypotheses concerning the causal relationships between media coverage and community and neighborhood issue concerns.[31]

The analysis, therefore, will examine the diachronic rather than synchronic correlations between newspaper coverage and concern for each issue. That is, the correlations between newspaper coverage and public concern for each issue over time will be determined, thus making time period the unit of analysis.[32] By comparing the diachronic correlations when newspaper coverage precedes and follows by six months each public concern measurement, some tentative statements can be made about cause and effect relationships.[33]

Table 6 about here

Table 6 shows correlations between newspaper coverage and concern about community and neighborhood issues over the six time periods. The left-hand column shows correlations for the relationship between public concern about the issues and the ac-

cumulated coverage of each over the preceding six-month period, while the right-hand column shows correlations between public concern about the issues and accumulated coverage following the measurement. Thus, the left-hand column tests the causal impact of newspaper coverage on public concern about the issues and the right-hand column the opposite relationship.[34]

The results in Table 6 provide no clear-cut evidence in regard to the hypothesis that newspaper coverage would have stronger affect on public concern about community issues than vice versa. The correlation for public concern leading newspaper coverage for economic development is large and significant, but a moderate correlation is for the opposite relationship for this issue, suggesting mutual influence. Similarly, smaller correlations are evident in both directions for both the education and the needy issues.

The results for the neighborhood issues in Table 6 also offer mixed support for the hypothesis that public concern about neighborhood issues would have a stronger affect on newspaper coverage about them than vice versa. For the sewers, drug abuse and street lighting issues, the large negative correlations indicate that newspaper coverage appears to decrease public concern about them, while the correlations testing the opposite relationships are smaller. Small correlations in both causal directions are found for the litter issue.

Table 7 about here

Table 7 shows the same analysis for the four overlapping

issues: crime, traffic control, streets, and housing. At the community level, the correlations for the crime and traffic control issues suggest that public concern has a greater (and negative) influence on newspaper coverage than the opposite causal direction. The correlations for the streets and the housing issues indicate that newspaper coverage has more influence on public concern than the reverse case. At the neighborhood level, public concern appears to have a stronger impact on newspaper coverage of the crime and housing issues than in the opposite direction. Newspaper coverage has a greater influence on public concern than the reverse relationship for the traffic control and streets issues. Again, the causal relationship between newspaper coverage and public concern varies according to the issue.

Table 8 about here

Finally, Table 8 shows relationships between neighborhood and community public concern for the crime, traffic control, streets and housing issues over the six time periods. The strongest correlations are found for community leading neighborhood issue concerns and between the two variables in the same time period. Thus the hypothesis that neighborhood issue concerns would have a greater influence on community-wide ones is contradicted by these results.

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study supported the hypothesis that newspaper coverage would have greater influence on concerns about

perceived community than neighborhood issues. This finding is consistent with past evidence that the agenda-setting power of the media is strongest on unobtrusive issues.[35] The strong relationship between public concern and newspaper coverage for the four issues on both the neighborhood and perceived community agendas suggests, however, that direct experience may be a factor in creating issue concern at both levels. Yet community issue concerns appeared to have a greater influence on neighborhood ones than vice versa, contrary to what was hypothesized.

The hypotheses that newspaper coverage would lead to higher levels of concern about perceived community issue concerns, while concern about neighborhood issues would lead to greater newspaper coverage, were not supported by the results. The causal patterns between concern and newspaper coverage varied from issue to issue. These results indicate the importance of examining agenda-setting effects of media on individual issues rather than aggregate rankings of sets of issues.

Several limitations should be kept in mind when considering these results. First, the shortness of the time series for each issue (six observations) prevented the use of more elaborate procedures to test causal relations. Consequently, the causal patterns found in this study should be considered at most suggestive, until more precise tests are possible. Second, the four-to-five month lag between observations in this study might have been too long or too short in some cases to tap adequately the causal dynamics between public concern and newspaper coverage of issues. Future studies with closer spaced observations are

needed to determine the proper lag lengths to be used for each individual issue. Finally, these results only provide evidence about changes in in the size of aggregate public opinion, not about individual-level reactions to newspaper coverage of the issues. Individual-level data is needed in order to examine the variety of contingent conditions, such as exposure patterns to community media, which might affect the relationships found in this study.[36]

This study unfortunately was not able to examine the role of interpersonal communication in determining neighborhood and community issue concerns. As noted earlier, it seems reasonable that interpersonal communication, coupled with media coverage, is an important factor in the process by which certain issues are converted from neighborhood to community issues and vice versa. It would seem that organized groups would also play a role in this process. More research is needed on these topics.

Finally, the results show that citizens are concerned about issues at both the neighborhood and community levels. However, they also show that neighborhood issues, at least in the Louisville community, tend to receive less coverage than those of importance to the entire community. This difference is understandable, given the newspapers' desire to report on topics of interest to the greatest numbers of people. Yet they also point out how valuable neighborhood or zoned editions of newspapers can be in urban communities, in order to cover important neighborhood issues. Indeed, a widely read section of the Louisville newspapers is the special neighborhood supplement aimed at the many distinct neighborhoods in the area which accompanies the newspa-

pers once a week.

Appendix A

Coding Category Definitions for Neighborhood and Community Issues

Crime. References to local police departments, police conduct, and victim or victimless crimes.

Economic Development. References to unemployment, problems of joblessness, and the need to develop business and industry in the area.

Education. References to public elementary, secondary, or post-secondary education in Louisville and Jefferson County, including state and federal programs affecting local school systems.

The Environment. References to air, water, noise, and other forms of pullition or environmental problems in the area.

Streets. References to street maintenance problems, construction, widening, and completion of road projects in the area.

Local Government. References to the efficiency, effectiveness, and intentions of local government, including intentions and performances of local elected and nonelected public officials.

Housing. References to the quality and quantity of housing in the Louisville and Jefferson County area.

Public Recreation. References to public parks, playgrounds, golf courses, other public facilities, and recreation programs.

The Needy. References to the disadvantaged, handicapped, and mentally ill, including related social services programs.

Traffic Control. All references to traffic control probelms, speeding, stop light or sign problems, and parking.

Sewers. References to drainage, sewers, and related problems, such as standing water, flooding, and wet basements.

Litter. All references to litter and trash in roads, public areas, and yards.

Street Lighting. All references to problems of unlit streets, burned-out street lights, and dark public parking lots.

Drug Abuse. All references to the use, sale and control of illegal drugs, or alcohol.

Civic Spirit. References to activites or the lack of them that would contribute to community understanding and cooperation.

NOTES

1. Jack M. McLeod and Steven H. Chaffee, "The Construction of Social Reality," in James T. Tedeschi, ed., The Social Influence Process (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1972), pp. 50-100.

2. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, eds., The Emergence of American Political Issues (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1977).

3. However, it seems that a person's evaluation of whether or not an issue is important is somewhere between a cognition and attitude. Perhaps, then, there is a need for an additional category in between the two.

4. Jack M. McLeod, Lee B. Becker and James E. Byrnes, "Another Look at the Agenda-Setting Function of the Press," Communication Research, 1:131-166 (April, 1974).

5. Leonard Tipton, Roger D. Haney and John R. Baseheart, "Media Agenda-Setting in City and State Elections," Journalism Quarterly, 52: 15-22 (Spring, 1975).

6. Philip Palmgreen and Peter Clarke, "Agenda-Setting with Local and National Issues," Communication Research, 4: 435-52 (October 1977).

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8. L. Erwin Atwood, Ardyth B. Sohn, and Harold Sohn, "Daily Newspaper Contributions to Community Discussion," Journalism Quarterly, 55: 570-576 (Autumn 1978).

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10. McLeod, Becker and Byrnes, op cit.

11. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media," Public Opinion Quarterly, 36: 176-187 (Summer, 1972).

12. Maxwell E. McCombs, "Newspaper versus Television: Mass Communication Effects Across Time," in Shaw and McCombs, op cit.,

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18. Jeffrey C. Hubbard, Melvin DeFleur, and Lois D. DeFleur, "Mass Media Influence on Public Conceptions of Social Problems," Social Problems, 23: 23-34 (October 1975).

19. Roy L. Behr and Shanto Iyengar, "Television News, Real-World Cues, and Changes in the Public Agenda," Public Opinion Quarterly, 49: 38-58 (Spring 1985).

20. Clarice Olien, George A. Donohue, and Phillip Tichenor, "Media and Stages of Social Conflict," Journalism Monographs, No. 90, November, 1984.

21. Ibid.

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23. Stanley Murrell and Paul Schulte, "Measuring Citizen Evaluations of Services Amidst Community Change," American Journal of Community Psychology, 9: 387-399 (1980).

24. Stanley Murrell and Paul Schulte, "A Procedure for Systematic Citizen Input to Community Decision-Making," American Journal of Community Psychology, 8: 19-30 (1980).

25. See Murrell and Schulte, Ibid., for a further description of the sample and procedures.

26. Seymour Sudman, Reducing the Cost of Surveys (New York: Longman, 1964).

27. See Maxwell McCombs, "Newspaper versus Television: Mass Communication Effects Across Time, in Shaw and McCombs, op cit.

28. See Smith, op cit., for further detail on this content analysis.

29. Chaim H. Eyal, James P. Winter, and William F. DeGeorge, "The Concept of Time Frame in Agenda Setting," in D. Charles Whitney and Ellen Wartella, eds., Mass Communication Yearbook,

Volume 2 (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982), pp. 212-217.

30. Gerald Stone and Maxwell McCombs, "Tracing the Time Lag in Agenda Setting," Journalism Quarterly, 58: 51-55 (Spring 1981).

31. See Becker, op cit.

32. For a discussion of synchronic versus diachronic correlation, see Johan Galtung, Theory and Methods of Social Research (Oslo, Norway: Scandinavian University Books, 1970).

33. For a discussion of more elaborate time-series analysis procedures, see: Richard McCleary and Richard A. Hay, Jr., Applied Time Series Analysis for the Social Sciences (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1980).

34. While the diachronic correlations are based on N of only six time periods, they are quite stable, given that the newspaper coverage rankings are based on the entire population of editions during the period studied and that the public concern rankings are determined from samples of over 450 respondents. Spearman rank-order rather than Pearson Product-Moment correlations are used in this analysis, because they are less sensitive to extreme high or low values in small samples.

35. Tucker, op cit.; Weaver et al., op cit.

36. Lutz Erbring, Edie n. Godlenberg, and Arthur Miller, "Front-Page News and Real-World Cues: A New Look at Agenda-Setting by the Media," American Political Science Review, 24: 16-49 (February 1980).

TABLE 1: Top-Ten Community and Neighborhood Issue Concerns in Six Surveys Conducted from 1980 to 1982

Community Issue	Number of Mentions	Rank	Number of Mentions	Neighborhood Issue
*Crime	1,455	1	1,224	*Crime
Economic Development	1,141	2	286	Sewers
Education	855	3	279	*Traffic Control
The Environment	428	4	268	*Housing
*Streets	407	5	246	*Streets
Local Government	364	6	201	*Public Recreation
*Housing	229	7	173	Litter
*Public Recreation	227	8	164	Street Lighting
The Needy	221	9	115	Drug Abuse
*Traffic Control	187	10	111	Civic Spirit

Total mentions of each issue topic in the six surveys. See Appendix A for definitions of each category.

*A top-ten community and neighborhood issue.

TABLE 2: Number of Articles Published on Community and Neighborhood Issues in The Louisville Times and the Courier-Journal from January, 1980 through July, 1982

Issue	Article Count	Rank
Overlapping Issues		
Crime	3,481	1
Traffic Control	300	8
Streets	569	5
Housing	2,626	3
Community Issues		
Economic Development	1,667	4
Education	3,230	2
The Needy	456	6
Neighborhood Issues		
Sewers	240	10
Drug Abuse	356	7
Litter	242	9
Street Lighting	82	11

The article count for each issue was determined from the newspapers' electronic morgue. See Appendix A for definitions of each category.

The environment, local government, public recreation, and civic spirit issues were excluded from this analysis, because matching categories were not available on the newspapers' computer system.

TABLE 3: Neighborhood and Community Issue Concern Rankings in Six Surveys Conducted from 1980 to 1982

Issues	Survey Date May 1980	Sept. 1980	Dec. 1980	April 1981	Sept. 1981	Feb. 1982
Community Issues						
Crime	1	1	1	1	1	1
Traffic Control	5	7	5	7	7	7
Streets	4	4	4	4	4	6
Housing	6	6	6	6	5	4
Economic Development	3	2	3	2	2	2
Education	2	3	2	3	3	3
The Needy	7	5	7	5	6	5
Neighborhood Issues						
Crime	1	1	1	1	1	1
Traffic Control	4	7	3	3	3	2
Streets	3	4	4	2	4	5
Housing	6	2	2	3	5	3
Sewers	2	2	5	5	2	4
Drug Abuse	8	8	7	8	8	8
Litter	7	5	8	6	6	6
Street Lighting	5	6	6	7	7	7

Rankings were determined by the number of mentions of each issue in the surveys.

TABLE 4: Newspaper Coverage Rankings of Community and Neighborhood Issues In the Six-Month Period Prior to each Survey

Issue	Six-Month Coverage Prior to: May 1980	Sept. 1980	Dec. 1980	April 1981	Sept. 1981	Feb. 1982
Overlapping Issues						
Crime	1	1	1	1	1	1
Traffic Control	7	7	8	10	9	7
Streets	5	5	5	6	5	5
Housing	3	3	3	3	3	3
Community Issues						
Economic Development	4	4	4	4	4	4
Education	2	2	2	2	1	1
The Needy	8	8	7	8	8	6
Neighborhood Issues						
Sewers	11	11	10	5	6	10
Drug Abuse	6	6	6	7	7	9
Litter	9	9	9	9	10	8
Street Lighting	10	10	11	11	11	11

Rankings were determined by the article count for each issue in the six month prior to the month in which each survey was conducted.

TABLE 5: Correlations between Aggregate Issue and Newspaper Agendas in Six Time Periods

Time Period	Issue Category	
	Community	Neighborhood
May 1980	.79*	.13
September 1980	.71*	.30
December 1980	.71*	.69
April 1981	.71*	.57
September 1981	.71*	.64
February 1982	.77*	.71*

*$p < .05$

Spearman's Rho rank-order correlations are reported, based on N = 7 for community issues and N = 8 for neighborhood issues.

TABLE 6: Diachronic Correlations Over the Six Time Periods Examining Causal Influence Between Newspaper Coverage and Public Concern for Community and Neighborhood Issues

Issue	Causal Direction Tested: Newspaper Coverage → Public Concern	Causal Direction Tested: Public Concern → Newspaper Coverage
Community Issues		
Economic Development	.43	.77*
Education	-.23	-.34
The Needy	.26	.14
Neighborhood Issues		
Sewers	-.57	-.29
Drug Abuse	-.66	-.37
Litter	.20	.17
Street Lighting	-.86*	-.31

The left-hand column shows correlations over the six time periods between six months of newspaper coverage of the issue prior to the month in which each survey was conducted and public concern for each issue. The right-hand column shows correlations over the six time periods between six months of newspaper coverage after the month in which each survey was conducted and public concern for each issue.

Spearman's Rho rank-order correlations are shown, based on N = 6 time periods for each issue.

*$p < .05$

TABLE 7: Diachronic Correlations Over the Six Time Periods Examining the Causal Influence Between Newspaper Coverage and Public Concern for Overlapping Community and Neighborhood Issues

	Causal Direction Tested:			
	Community Concern		Neighborhood Concern	
Issue	Newspaper Coverage → Public Concern	Public Concern → Newspaper Coverage	Newspaper Coverage → Public Concern	Public Concern → Newspaper Coverage
Crime	.06	-.86*	.06	-.54
Traffic Control	.11	-.23	.63	-.06
Streets	-.43	-.11	-.34	.11
Housing	.77*	-.14	.03	-.80*

The first and third columns show correlations over the six time periods between six months of newspaper coverage prior to the month in which each survey was conducted and public concern for each issue. The second and fourth columns show correlations over the six time periods between six months of newspaper coverage after the month in which each was conducted and public concern for each issue.

Spearman's Rho rank-order correlations are reported, based on N = 6 for each issue.

*$p < .05$

TABLE 8: Diachronic Correlations Over the Six Time Periods Examining Causal Influence Between Community and Neighborhood Issue Concerns

Issue	Causal Direction Tested: Community Concern → Neighborhood Concern	Same Time Period	Neighborhood Concern → Community Concern
Crime	.55	.86*	.15
Traffic Control	.80*	.60	-.05
Streets	.70	.91*	-.15
Housing	-.15	.49	.10

The first column shows correlations between concern about the issues at the community level in the survey prior to the one in which neighborhood concern was measured. The second column shows the rank-order correlations between community and neighborhood issue concerns in the same time period. The third column shows the rank-order correlations between neighborhood issue concerns in the survey prior to the one in which concerns at the community level were measured.

Spearman's Rho rank-order correlations are reported, based on N = 6 for each issue.

*$p < .05$